CHRONOLOGY OF LETTUCE STRUGGLE (written 9/70;updated 12/72)

The events are complex but the issue in the lettuce strike and boycott is simple: Will farm workers have the right to build a union of their own or will their employers choose a union for them? The workers in the Salinas and Santa Maria Valleys organized quietly and waited patiently for a victory in Delano. But the Salinas growers ignored their workers, sought out the Teamsters Union and signed "back door contracts" without consulting the workers and without offering any kind of election or ratification procedure. When the contracts were announced the workers were frustrated and angry . They went on strike August 24, 1970 and are currently carrying on a lettuce boycott to break the Teamster-grower "contracts" and to gain the right to have a union of their own. The present struggle developed as follows:

1959	AWOC/AFL-CIO begins statewide farm labor organizing drive.
1962-65	Development of Cesar Chavez' National Farm Workers Assoc. (NFWA).
Sept. 1965	Beginning of Delano grape strike: NFWA & AWOC working together
1966-1967	Merger of AWOC & NFWA into United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC, AFL-CIO). Long struggles with DiGiorgio & Perelli-Minetti (both of whom sought out the Teamsters to avoid UFWOC) end in contracts for UFWOC & jurisdictional agreement with Teamsters (July 1967).
1966-1970	UFW locals develop all over California including Salinas Valley & Santa Maria.
July 23, 1970	Salinas growers meet and decide to "feel out the Teamsters" about a contract for field workers. (This fact testified to in court by Cal Watkins of United Fruit on September 1, 1970.)
July 28, 1970	Salinas growers announce that Teamsters represent their workers. Santa Maria, Imperial Valley growers follow suit. Workers learn about it from the newspaper.
July 29, 1970	Victory in Delano: Giumarra and all Delano growers sign contracts. Workers march in Salinas, hold rallies, organize UFW committees at each farm, go on strike at selected ranches and in other ways express desire to have their own farm workers union.
July 30 - Aug. 23, 1970	Cesar Chavez, in private and in public, repeatedly asks for elections as a way of avoiding a strike - no response from growers. Teamsters sign another jurisdictional agreement (8/11/70) honoring UFW's right to organize farm workers' union. Most growers refuse to release Teamsters from contracts.
August 24,1970	Massive strike begins in Salinas Valley (also Santa Maria). 7,000 farm workers are involved. L.A.Times calls it "Largest Farm Labor Strike in U.S.History." Growers admit a 2/3 reduction in production. Denied elections, the workers demonstrate through the most successful farm labor strike in history that they want to be represented by Cesar Chavez' United Farm Workers.
August 25,1970	UFW attorney, Jerry Cohen beaten during strike and hospitalized. Other incidents occur almost daily. Clergymen of all faith urged to join picket line.
August 30,1970	Union representation election at United Fruit supervised by Catholic Bishops Committee proves again that workers want UFW. United Fruit (InterHarvest) signs contract with UFW ($2.10 per hour, hiring hall, grievance procedures, job security, pesticide clause, etc.). Spokesman for company says to press: "The Teamsters had our contract but UFW has our workers."

...more.....

August 31,1970	Judge Marion Smith, Santa Maria, refuses to grant injunction against UFW strike, ruling that strike is not jurisdictional since Teamsters cannot present evidence that they represent workers.
Sept. 4, 1970	Purex (Freshpict) holds representation election, recognizes UFW and agrees to negotiate.
Sept.17, 1970	Judge Anthony Brazil receives no evidence that Teamsters represent farm workers but he still issues permanent injunction against all UFW strike activity in Salinas area. Workers decide to take their cause to the cities. Lettuce boycott begins.
Oct. 6, 1970	Judge Gordon Campbell orders UFW to stop boycotting Bud Antle lettuce. UFW appeals ruling.
Dec. 4, 1970	Judge Campbell orders Cesar Chavez to jail until he calls off boycott of Antle's lettuce. Workers set up 24 hour vigil outside jail.
Dec.24, 1970	California Supreme Court orders Chavez released from jail pending full hearing (April 15, 1971: Calif. Supreme Court overturns Judge Campbell's injunction against boycott).
March 26, 1971	UFW & Teamsters sign 3-year jurisdictional agreement; countersigned by George Meany & Frank Fitzsimmons; Teamsters agree again to withdraw from their lettuce "contracts."
April 23, 1971	Mel Finnerman Co. signs contract with UFW following representation procedure.
May 7 - Nov. 10, 1971	UFW and lettuce growers negotiate without success. Lettuce boycott begins again.
Dec. 1971- May 1972	Growers persuade National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to seek a court order against UFW boycott; Nan Freeman killed on picket line in Florida; UFW receives charter from AFL-CIO; Coca-Cola & H. P. Hood have elections & negotiate contracts in Florida.
May 3, 1972	UFW wins struggle with NLRB. Lettuce boycott continues.
May 9, 1972	Arizona farm labor bill (H.B.2134) passed. Cesar Chavez begins 24 day fast. Recall movement started in Arizona. Si, se puede!
June 4, 1972	6,000 people join farm workers in Phoenix as Cesar ends fast.
Nov. 7, 1972	Proposition 22 defeated in California, 58% to 42%.
Dec.12, 1972	Frank Fitzsimmons, President of Teamsters crosses UFW picket line in L.A. to speak to annual convention of American Farm Bureau Federation. L.A.Times headline: "Teamster President Proposes Alliance with Growers Group."
Dec.13, 1972	Teamsters announce intention to activate lettuce contracts.
Dec.14, 1972	Dolores Huerta appeals to friends of farm workers to intensify their support for boycott. One reporter asked: "The boycott will put economic pressure on the growers but how will that affect the Teamsters?" Dolores' reply: "The growers invited them in and the growers can invite them out."

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED. Please avoid head (iceberg) lettuce and join the Safeway and A & P boycotts. SI, SE PUEDE!

National Farm Worker Ministry
1411 W. Olympic Blvd., Rm.511
Los Angeles, Ca 90015
12/27/72